12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
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Tocantins states that many Mundurucú were also being pressed into household servitude by the whites,[34] a practice common to all of Amazonia at that time. Many Mundurucú accompanied their patrons to work in different regions, and others remained all year at their rubber avenues in the valley of the Tapajós. Illustrative of this spread of Mundurucú over the upper Tapajós region are Coudreau's figures, which give the Mundurucú population of the banks of the upper Tapajós in 1895 as 173; of the Juruena-Bararaty rivers, 72; and of the São Manoel River, 49.[35] All these scattered Mundurucú were living in Brazilian-type houses with an average population of ten in each house. This process was obviously a continuation on a local scale of the earlier spread of the Mundurucú to the lower Tapajós and the Madeira tributaries.

The population of the savannah villages decreased during this period because of death from disease and loss of people to the river banks. However, the villages themselves persisted as strong social units. Two factors are mainly responsible for this: First, the chieftain, instead of losing function, actually became more important, and for some time the villages became politically more tightly integrated. The chief now had the additional position as intermediary with the white man and as such was the source of trade goods; the modern Mundurucú still speak of the days when "chiefs were strong and bought everything for the people." After the patrons became firmly established and gained influence among the Indians, they began to appoint their own "chiefs," frequently without regard for the traditional system of inheritance. In time, as will be seen, this undermined the chieftaincy and became a source of conflict. Second, warfare, for both mercenary

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 148.
[35] Coudreau, 1897, p. 188.

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175 797 little progress was made in attracting the Indians to the mission. The priests made the rounds of the villages preaching and baptizing, and children were recruited for the school, but such contacts were sporadic.

175 439 797 In the late 1920's, the world price of rubber rose somewhat as a result of export restrictions imposed on the planters of British Malaya, and the attraction of higher returns caused the Indians to become more engaged in trade. This meant, of course, that more Indians came into contact with the mission in its new role as a trading post. The regatões still offered competition, but the Mundurucú, who knew nothing of weights and prices, nonetheless learned that they received a greater return for their rubber and manioc flour from the missionaries. They came to tap rubber in increasing numbers along the Cururú, and many left the savannah villages for all-year residence on its shores. By the 1930's, permanent villages began to grow up on the river banks. This population shift proceeded so rapidly that by 1950 there were only about 360 Mundurucú left on the savannahs, whereas the Cururú population numbered 700.

[341] [166] [162]

175 439 657 Of less importance in attracting a permanent population to the Cururú was the founding on that river of the Mundurucú post of the Brazilian Indian Protection Service in 1941. This post followed the establishment of an Indian reservation in 1939 that included most of the country lying inland from the Tapajós and bounded by the Cururú and Tropas rivers. Traders were barred from the reservation but since no inspection points were set up on the Tropas, Cabitutú, and Cadiriri rivers, the Tapajós River patrons and some regatões were still able to visit the savannahs. However, the Cururú, where the bulk of the Mundurucú population now lives, was effectively closed

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3

economic life

Until about 1925, the bulk of the Munduricú population of the Tapajós area lived in the region of mixed savannah and gallery forest that begins some twenty to thirty miles east of the upper Tapajós River. The population of about 360 living in seven villages in this area today is constantly diminishing. The villages and their approximate populations are: Arö, 90; Cabitutú, 45; Cabruá, 67; Aipka, 50; Dekodyem, 50; Cauí, 25; and Parawaröktiká, 30. The last-named village is in the traditional savannah area and has some antiquity, but in recent years the organization of village life has shifted to the characteristic pattern of the Cururú River. Cauí was established in recent times by conservative Mundurucú who became dissatisfied with their new way of life on the Cururú River and wished to revert to more traditional practice. How-

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the women, but occasionally spiteful remarks are exchanged or a hair-pulling match, usually over a man, occurs. These events provide the grist for conversation for weeks.

Relations between the women of the savannah communities are subjected to an extra, situational strain because of an unequal ratio of the sexes. In the village of Cabruá, for example, there were thirteen mature men and eighteen women; the five unattached females constituted a serious threat to the married women, for they seduced many of the husbands and attempted to induce them to leave their wives. The disproportion between the sexes is promoted by the greater mobility of the male and the structure of savannah-Cururú relations. Young *campineiros* sometimes wander into the Cururú River villages, marry there and settle according to the matrilocal pattern. But fear of witchcraft and long distances from rubber-producing areas inhibit the reverse from taking place. The result is a shortage of husbands in the savannahs and a dearth of wives on the Cururú. Jealousy over sex is rife among savannah women, and mutual hostilities are structured by the support given by the matrilocal extended family.

The nuclear family is not an important social unit in the savannah villages, although it is basic to life in the rubber season, when village and extended family break up to exploit the scattered resource. But during the eight to nine months of annual residence in the villages, the nuclear family has few vital functions. The men's house prevents it from being a consumption unit in the subsistence economy and from being even a co-resident group. And the thoroughgoing division of labor between the sexes delivers the nuclear family from any primary responsibility in the processes of production. Husband and wife occa-

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lages and easy transportation is lacking. But on the Cu- 439
rurú, even the man who has a separate dry-season resi- 461
dence has direct access to his village by canoe.

THE CURURÚ VILLAGE

The Mundurucú population of the Cururú River has for 162
several years maintained an average figure of 700. This in- 361
cludes 200 Indians with permanent residences at the mis-
sion and 70 to 80 who live at the Indian post. Part of these
latter two groups spread out every summer to collect rub- [221]
ber while the others work for the two agencies as garden-
ers, general workmen, fishermen, and crew members on
the launches. The post and mission Mundurucú settle-
ments are in no way autonomous villages, and all general
economic and political direction is provided by the Indian
agent and the priests.

The rest of the population is principally distributed in eleven settlements ranging in size from hamlets of two or three houses with populations of 20 to 25 people to the largest settlement, Missão Velha,[1] with eleven houses and 90 inhabitants. In addition there are many scattered dwellings along the banks which are the all-year residences of one or two nuclear families. In 1942 there were only about seven villages on the Cururú and practically no isolated dwellings, although the population then was substantially the same. The increase in number of villages and of families living in isolation is the result of a fission process in which segments of villages split away to form new communities. The Cururú River settlements are in this sense more unstable than the contemporary savannah communities. Thus, the average population of the five traditional savannah villages, excluding Parawaröktiká, which has no

[1] Old Mission. So named because it is near the site of the first mission, abandoned in 1921.

12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
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men's house, and the newly formed Cauí, is 60. On the other hand, the average Cururú River community, excluding the mission and Indian-post settlements, numbers less than 40 people. The Cururú settlements have few of the cohesive aspects of the savannah villages, but are afflicted with the cultural inheritance of many of their divisive tendencies. This can be illustrated by briefly presenting the community organization in one Cururú village.

Its eleven houses and 90 people make Missão Velha the largest village on the Cururú River. The village suffers from the same disadvantages that made it necessary to move the mission from the area. It is set back about a half mile north of the river bank because the river here is bordered by a stretch of savannah that is inundated annually. There is a clear stream about ten minutes walk to the east, but the annual flooding makes it inaccessible in the rainy season and water must be taken from the intervening flooded forest. To the north, behind the village, is a region of low savannah interspersed with stretches of forest. There is a limited amount of land suitable for horticulture, and, after seventeen years of occupation of the village, nearby land is already scarce. An additional disadvantage of Missão Velha is the presence of the usual quota of insects that infest the Cururú, which make the relatively insect-free savannah villages more agreeable.

Missão Velha, like most of the other riverine villages, grew up without planning of internal arrangement or location except for proximity to rubber avenues. All but one of its eleven houses have wattle-and-daub walls in the Brazilian fashion. The exception has walls made of vertical wooden laths, also a Brazilian mode of building. One house has the high, steep roof and rounded ends of the aboriginal dwelling, although its walls are of mud. The cook sheds adjoining the rear entrance or the side of each house are a distinctively Brazilian trait.

12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
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moving out of village life altogether to live in the relative isolation of their rubber avenues. Others have left the Cururú and are found near its mouth on the Tapajós. Not all fission arises from factional splits such as that described. Individual persons and nuclear families are always on the move from one village to another or to permanent residence in the rubber avenue because of unresolved interpersonal conflicts.

These disputes are frequently over women, who are scarce on the Cururú. It has been said that the savannah villages suffer from a shortage of men because of the slow but continuous emigration of the more mobile young males, which results in hostility and competition between the younger females. The opposite situation prevails on the Cururú. There, the young campineiro men who have drifted to the shores of the stream have upset the male-female ratio. The migration of young men from the savannahs to the Cururú has slowed up so much in recent years that the ratio between the sexes may readjust itself. At present, however, the men's excursions generally lead to the married women, and such liaisons cannot be long concealed in small villages. Extramarital sex relations are common in the savannahs also, but there are enough unmarried girls to make female adultery less frequent and competition over women less intense. Correspondingly, there are fewer cases of hostility between men in the savannahs caused by sex.

In addition to the effects of disputes over sorcery and sex, economic causes, such as the growing scarcity of land near the larger villages, are also responsible for social fission. When one's village house gets old it is often more convenient to take up permanent residence near the rubber avenue, especially if one produces sufficient rubber to buy the copper farinha-toasting pan.

/21 cont./
241 time of planting onward. In terms of their basic meaning, these
192 two words could be translated as follows: kat as "clearing" and ko
462 as "planting." It thus becomes clearer why the woman would never say, for instance, that she is going to the kat, to the clearing, because it is not she who does this, but /would say/ that she is going to the ko, the planting, because it is she, in fact, who does the planting. The opposite applies to the man. If, however, there is need for the use of a general, impersonal term, the man will also use the word ko, but with the respective modifier of its being "hers" or "the woman's," so that no misunderstanding may arise.

2. Garden and family: agricultural property and mutual assistance

241 It is plain that this complex of agricultural matters is reflected
621 in the family life of the Indians, not only for the Mundurukú who still live communally in the old village system, but also for those
[178] who have broken away from this way of life and set up a separate
[591] nucleus with their family, living an isolated life with their own house and garden. Indeed, nowadays, it is necessary to make a distinction:

[162] 1. Between the Mundurukú Indians of the interior, numbering 250, a minority of approximately one-fifth of the total of 1,200, who still live according to the traditional system of tribal communities or villages;

[177] 2. Between the Mundurukú who are already more or less acculturated /and live/ on the Tapajós, Cururú, Tropas, etc. rivers.

/22/ Within the first group, in the interior, we find more or
241 less the primitive or traditional form of the Mundurukú agricultural
476 system: a system of collective labor based on mutual assistance.
621 Murphy indicates the present conditions in the villages of the interior when he says: "Every adult /Mundurukú/ of the plains of the male sex has his own plot which is cleared by the collective effort of all the men in the village and which is planted with manioc roots with the cooperation of the entire village." (11) This cooperative labor

11. Murphy, 1954: 28.